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CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM · LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO · PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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TRUMP PRESIDENCY: CAPITALISM IN DISARRAY





STUDENTS AND WORKERS ERUPT IN PROTEST





OUR FIGHT

★Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

★ the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

★Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

★While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

★Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

★Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

★Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

★Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

★Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

★Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Trump Presidency: Capitalism in Disarray

The electoral victory of Donald Trump, a suit-and-tie Klansman, shows the power of racism in today's United States. The main wing of the U.S. ruling class did its best to swing the presidential race to Hillary Clinton, a more reliable stooge for finance capital and U.S. imperialism. But in spite of overwhelming support from the bosses' media, political donors, establishment politicians, and celebrity entertainers from Beyonce to LeBron James, Clinton couldn't close the deal. The vicious racism stoked by Republicans and Democrats in equal measure—including the racist mass incarceration and welfare reform championed by Bill and Hillary Clinton in the 1990s—has come home to roost.

The election confirmed the deep problems confronting the U.S. rulers. The bosses underestimated the impact of decades of wage-killing exploitation, economic crises, racist and sexist demagoguery, and ever-widening inequity. "It was a failure to capture the boiling anger of a large portion of the American electorate that feels left behind by a selective recovery, betrayed by trade deals that they see as threats to their jobs and disrespected by establishment Washington, Wall Street and the mainstream media" (New York Times, 11/9).

While the Trump vote was predominantly a phenomenon of white workers' alienation, Black and Latin and Asian workers have also tired of waiting for their lives to get better. Eight years of Barack Obama have resulted in mass deportations, wage stagnation, a bank bailout, and widespread disillusionment. The bosses' biggest concern relates to the waning of U.S. patriotism and how it could undermine their plans for the next major ground war. They cannot count on a cynical, disaffected working class to rally around a military draft. In short, the rulers have a lot of work to do.

Progressive Labor Party also has much work to do. Communists have no reason to be depressed by this election. Fundamentally, our goal remains the same: to build multiracial unity and overthrow the bosses' murderous system. But in a time when open racism has gained a mass base and a public platform at the highest levels, our challenge—and our opportunity—is even greater than before.

Much of the pro-Trump movement consisted of white workers misled by racism to act against their own class interests. It's our task to wage a principled struggle with all workers against the twin dangers of racism and identity politics. We must redouble our efforts on the job, in the schools, and in the streets. Only a mass movement for communist revolution can smash the racist horror show of capitalism for all time.

Trump Will Serve the Bosses

While the big finance capitalists clearly preferred the more reliable Clinton, they will most likely find a way to work with Trump and guarantee that he serves their interests, in particular their contested control over oil in the Middle East. In March, Trump was briefed by Richard Haass, the president of the Council on Foreign Relations, the main wing's preeminent, pro-imperialist think tank. "I respect Richard Haass," Trump said after the meeting. "I like him a lot." In his victory speech, Trump vowed to invest in rebuilding infrastructure, a top ruling-class priority. On the day after the election, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up more than two hundred points. The profit system did not miss a beat.

By the same token, workers had nothing to gain in this election. Under the rules of capitalist "democracy," they were forced to choose between two monsters: a gutter racist and sexual predator who demonized Muslims and undocumented immigrants, and a liberal racist and sexist who destroyed millions of lives as a career-long servant of the thieves of finance capital. After decades of destroying working-class families on behalf of their Wall Street patrons, Hillary and Bill Clinton were unable to deceive enough voters into believing their phony promises and lies. Too many workers saw them for who they are: racist opportunists in the pockets of the richest bosses.

If Trump's election proved anything, it's the necessity of working outside the electoral box.

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Multiracial protests in Seattle following Trump's victory

Housekeepers Fight Sexist Working Conditions

LOS ANGELES, Nov 2—After several months of organizing in secret, the housekeepers marched into the lobby of the hotel and charged the general manager with labor law violations.

Waging Antisexist Fight

They presented him with a copy of the paperwork they had filed with the National Labor Relations Board to have an election to be represented by UNITE-HERE, a union that represents other hotel workers in the area. They also gave him copies of charges they had filed with state agencies regarding health, safety and other violations.

These sexist bosses at an upscale hotel near our church have been violating labor laws. The 50 housekeepers, mainly Latin immigrant women, had to work through breaks and lunch to finish the rooms (many with balconies) that they were required to clean each day. In fact, they often had to work beyond the end of their shift with no pay.

This is yet another example of how capitalists constantly try to increase their rate of exploitation, and thus make more profit, by taking back (legally or illegally) benefits that workers have won. It's also an example of the inherent racism and sexism of the capitalist system. The owners segregate their workforce so they can super-exploit them.

First Lunch Break in 15 Years

Workers after worker got into the manager's face and called him out around specific forms of oppression and exploitation they had experienced at the hotel. This was inspiring to the members of our church and other community supporters who were present. That week the workers also started doing something they had never done before: taking their 10-minute morning and afternoon breaks and their 30-minute lunch—all together! A group from our church brought the workers a home-cooked lunch and joined them in dining and conversing outside the hotel.

The hotel hired a union-busting consulting firm and attempted to hold "captive-worker meetings" where small groups of workers would be subjected to a barrage of anti-union propaganda. Instead of just the small group reporting to the first meeting, all the housekeepers on the shift showed up and demanded that they all go to the meeting. Management caved in, and all the workers entered the room, along with a handful of community supporters.

An Injury to One is an Injury to All

As community supporters, we explained our opposition to attempts to intimidate workers. The manager and the consultant insisted that we were trespassing, interfering with a private corporate meeting, and must leave. We didn't.

Meanwhile, workers were demanding to know why the hotel had been mistreating them for 15 years and suddenly wanted to be their friend and warn them about the "evil" union. For about 40 minutes, the consultants sat there with their laptops gaping open, unable to start the meeting they had called. Then one of the housekeepers called out, "Can we go to work now?" Others joined in. "Do we have to stay here? Can we go to work? We don't want to be here."

When the manager said the meeting was not obligatory and that they could leave, all but three did. Despite the setback management suffered, no doubt their anti-union efforts will continue. In fact, it appeared that they were setting up one of the rank-and-file leaders to be fired. We will be there supporting these brave workers, including picketing, as necessary.

Cultivating Class Consciousness

As communists we want to spread the understanding that these workers' fight is everyone's fight. We are all part of the international working class, and racism, sexism, and super-exploitation hurt us all. We need to move our friends and fellow congregants at church to support these workers in a variety of ways.

As a first step we have invited them to the Second Sunday Supper at our church. In CHALLENGE, they can read about their struggle and many other struggles worldwide. They can see the importance of fighting sexism and racism as they read about women, especially Black and Latin, leading many of the fights.

As the bosses exploit workers to increase their profits, they are also preparing for World War III to maintain their worldwide profiteering empire. We need to get rid of this capitalist system once and for all. Through increased Challenge readership, study groups, conversations, and more fightbacks, we will be building lifelong relationships of struggle. Join the Progressive Labor Party and organize for communist revolution!✪

Worker-Student Alliance Disrupt Ceremony, Expose Criminal Tuition Hike

THE BRONX, November 6—Students and education workers ruined the day for the bootlicking administrators of Bronx Community College (BCC). Instead of an uneventful ribbon cutting ceremony on the new quad, the assembled deceitful politicians and appointees, including Lieutenant Governor Kathleen C. Hochul and Chancellor James B. Milliken, witnessed a determined, multiracial group of students and faculty protesting against tuition raises at the City University of New York (CUNY), of which BCC is a part. These politicians and administrators have voted repeatedly for these increases—and the President of our school had the nerve to invite them to BCC to be praised?



Tuition Hike, A Racist Attack

Our protest was just a small sample of the wrath that officialdom will be facing as more and more students and workers realize who their real enemies are, and as millions fight together to replace this anti-working class capitalist system.

A group quickly assembled to make signs that read "Raising tuition is a crime!" and "Milliken and Cuomo: Guilty of crimes against CUNY."

A sign that got a number of comments was "When CUNY was white, CUNY was free," referencing the racist history of CUNY. The University was free (and had an almost all-white student population) until the mid 1970s, when open admissions (meaning any student who graduated from New York City public high school could attend) increased the number of Black and Latin students.

Ever since, then tuition has been increasing. This is one of the many ways that a policy that is racist in effect, if not intent, also inflicts great harm on white students. In the past, CUNY tuition increased for only one specified year, which then remained at that price. This method changed in 2012, allowing the university to increase tuition every year. CUNY plans to increase tuition yet again on all students up to $250 each year from 2018 to 2021.

Admins in Bed with Pols

We knew we had struck a chord because the head of security and a vice president tried their best to shoo us away. The Vice President even begged us to leave because "we need the support of these politicians."

This reveals which side the administration is on. "We" refers not to students and faculty, but to the college bosses. They support each other to vote to raise tuition on already-struggling students. (According to NYPIRG, almost nearly 50 percent of college students struggle to eat everyday.) The weight of this racist system forces students—white as well as Black, Latin, Asian, and

Democrats, Republicans All the Same

1913-1921: Democrat Woodrow Wilson, a card carrying member of the Klu Klux Klan, exercised its bloody imperialist might in Latin America,. Military intervention included Mexico, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Panama, and Nicaragua.

1936: Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt unleased the national guard on Flint sit-down strikers

1937: Democrat Frankling D. Roosevelt called out the National Guard against the sit-down strikers at General Motors, Flint, Michigan.

1945: Democrat Harry Truman—a member of the Ku Klux Klan—dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, an instant genocide of 225,000 aimed as a threat to the Soviet Union.

1965: Democrat Lyndon B. Johnson ratcheted up war in Vietnam. Common chant during the antiwar movement was, ""Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?"

1973: Republican Richard Nixon backed the coup in Chile, and installed a bloody military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet.

1980: The Carter Doctrine was a **bipartisan** endeavor to protect U.S. oil interets in the Middle East with military force, threatening other imperialist rivals. U.S. invaded, occupied, bombed, devastated, and terrorized scores of working people.

1982: Under **Republican** Ronald Reagan, 30 million were unemployed for all or part of the year. 16 million lost medical insurance. New requirements eliminated free school lunches for over one million children.

1990-1991: Republican statesman and general Colin Powell masterminded the first Gulf War. It resulted in hundreds of thousands dead, wounded, and missing.

1995: Democrat Bill Clinton slaughtered 500,000 Iraqi children through sanctions and indiscriminate bombing.

1996: Democrat Bill and Hillary Clinton's welfare reform was instrumental in throwing millions of people—disproportionately Black mothers and children—into extreme poverty.

2009-2015: Democrat Barack Obama, first Black president, deported more immigrants than the sum of all the presidents in the 20th century—that's over 2.5 million people.

Trump Presidency: Fight Racism, Build Revolution

Continued from page 2

Don't vote—revolt! CHALLENGE and the Progressive Labor Party urge you to join the fight for communist revolution. We ask you to work with us in building a united, multiracial working class that will smash racism, sexism, national borders and the entire capitalist system.

Another Step Toward Fascism

As British economist Martin Wolf recently noted, the capitalists are dismantling their façade of liberal democracy, the veil for the bosses' dictatorship. As the bosses' crises intensify and world war grows more likely, Wolf sees "the rise of illiberal democracies or outright plebiscitary dictatorships in which the elected ruler exercises control over both the state and capitalists" (Financial Times, 8/30). What Wolf fails to acknowledge is that the move toward fascism—a phase of capitalism where the bosses rule all aspects of society directly--is inevitable. When their system is threatened, the rulers put any pretense of democracy aside.

This election saw crude efforts by the U.S. bosses to rig the process—and especially the capitalist media coverage—in Clinton's favor. What they failed to anticipate is that nearly half the voters would support the volatile Trump. The winner's false "populism" and racist scapegoating found traction with white working-class voters, including women--most notably in the Rust Belt, where Trump seized votes that Obama had won four years earlier.

The rulers' problems aren't confined to the U.S. The Brexit vote in the UK, the Colombian voters' rejection of the government's peace deal with guerrilla fighters, far-right racist Marine Le Pen's strong polling in the upcoming French presidential election—all of these reflect a worldwide crisis of capitalism.

Fight Back!

Heading into election day, both Clinton and Trump were "seen as dishonest and viewed unfavorably by a majority of voters" (NYT, 11/4), a reflection of the decay of U.S. capitalism. But for the working class, voting has never been the path to change the world. Elections are the bosses' mechanism to hold on to power by giving us the illusion of choice. But just knowing the system is broken isn't enough. To liberate our class, Black, Latin, Asian and white workers must unite to defeat the bosses' ideology of racism, sexism, individualism and anti-communism.

Trump's open racism is a danger to the working class, but it cannot defeat us. As we go to press, thousands across the country are erupting in multiracial protest, shutting down highways and burning the U.S. flag. Let's bring our communist slogan, "It's not just Trump, it's capitalism." One thing is clear: All sections of the working class are fed up with business as usual. The way out of this capitalist hell? Building Progressive Labor Party and the struggle for communist revolution.✪

College Tuition Hike

Continued from page 3

undocumented—to leave school because they don't have enough money. We told the VP that we had no use for these politicians and administrators, and we weren't going anywhere.

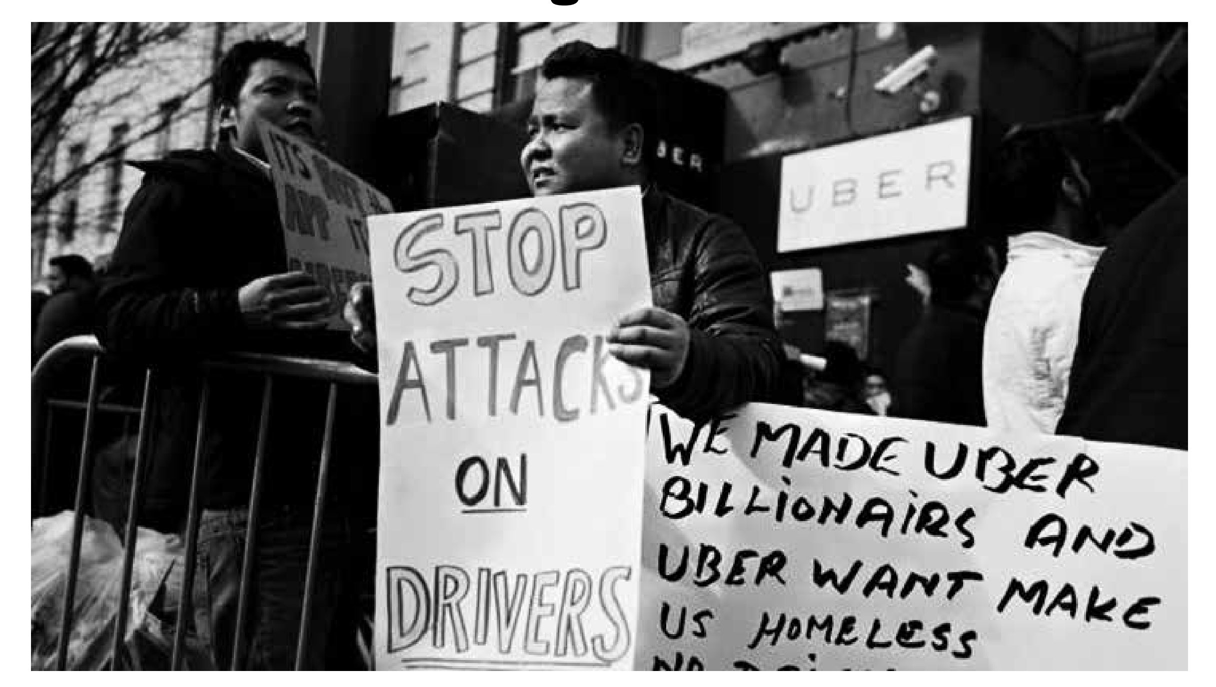
While students struggle to buy food and books, and pay their tuition—while largely-adjunct faculty are underpaid; 1 in 4 are on public assistance—college bosses live in luxury. CUNY's most recent scandal: City College President Lisa Coico (who recently resigned) was accused of taking over $100,000 of money from the University's foundation for personal expenses, including down-payment for a new home, new furniture, and housekeeping. Chancellor Milliken makes $490,568 in a public salary. This doesn't include his car or his $18,000/month four-bedroom terrace apartment on the Upper East Side, all paid for by the university. Under a profit making system, such inequality perfectly legal. Only under communism will education be liberated.

Fight Continues

Pleas did not move us. Angry stares did not deter us. Threats from wannabe-cops did not bother us. We gathered and prepared quickly and were there with our signs and our fists in the air, protesting this racist educational system. We are on high alert for the next event of the administration at BCC. We will be there, fighting against racism in the interests of the whole working class and preparing us for bigger fights yet to come.✪

On the Job Organizing

Uber Workers Fight to Unionize, Base for Communism



Uber workers rally in front of the in February

NEW YORK CITY, November 8—After months of organizing with other Uber bike messengers in the city, I joined a press conference marking our messenger union's debut at City Hall.

As a courier, we constantly have to navigate crazy traffic, potholed streets and overzealous kkkops giving us motor vehicle tickets to generate profit for the bosses.My initial two partners and myself began working in this group after we participated in a failed work action against the racist, sexist Uber ride-share platform last December (see CHALLENGE, 1/27).

That one failed because we didn't take into account how far the bosses would go to prevent a work shutdown. They had bribed the fleet with an unprecedented $50 bonus. Our efforts were hasty, and we failed to connect with the mostly Black and Latin-and increasingly women-workers who, under capitalism, risk their lives daily in these streets so the bosses can keep most of their profit.

Our latest effort proved more efficient. We collaborated with Uber drivers from a mass driver's union: another class of mainly African and Middle Eastern workers who've also endured Uber's racist wage cuts. We spoke with more messengers over a much longer period, building trust among workers. We're fighting to unionize the city's messengers for better wages, job safety equipment and employee designation.

Basebuilding Kicks into Gear

Of course, despite its well intentions, our struggle is a reformist one. But I have made inroads with some of my co-workers in the fight for communism. I've consistently given them CHALLENGE and discussed the roots of our exploitation: capitalism, and why we'll never have what we need under it.

The results have been encouraging! After initially accusing me of "supporting what Castro [Cuban socialist] is doing," one of my original partners is coming around to PL's ideas and happily takes each issue I give to him. The driver union's leader eagerly takes the paper whenever she sees me with new copies.

During a conversation with another messenger union member about this wretched system, he blurted out, "I don't believe in capitalism!" I was enthused at his response. Indeed, the workers are open to our Party's ideas.

Perhaps the greatest development has come from a worker who agrees with our communist politics. She also knows the true history of the Soviets we don't learn about in the bosses' schools.

She's agreed to come to a future study group in my club. And when she looks at our coverage of the bosses' election sham, she backs our tagline: "Elections can't fix capitalism."

Self-critically though, I have yet to give CHALLENGE to each worker, including the one who rejected capitalism. Another worker I gave a paper to last month was marginally interested (He believes himself too old to be joining with any other organizations, which is simply untrue.)

Though my confidence is rising, I sometimes doubt my ability to lead all of them to the Party. But I've fought against my anti-communist ideas to get to this point, and I will continue doing so!

My club just suggested a social gathering to invite my co-workers to in December. There, we'll discuss communist ideas more. I will continue giving updates in later issues.

Onward to communism!✪

Uberprofits from Isolating Workers

Uber, a billion-dollar multinational corporation, is a San Francisco-based transportation company that operates using a mobile app, connecting drivers and riders, while controlling pricing and payments. It is now in over 66 countries, and 507 cities worldwide (Uber.com). Uber also operates food delivery and courier services. Uber profits even when drivers and couriers aren't getting paid. The bosses "not only direct every aspect of a driver's workday, they also profit off the entire day through data collection (Motherboard, 2/2).

Uber attacks workers in two ways. One, all Uber workers are labeled independent contractors, meaning they receive no benefits i.e., health insurance, disability, overtime pay, pensions, unemployment, holidays, and the right to organize collectively (The Guardian, 7/19). Instead, all that money gets pocketed as profits. This is the latest of what has been termed the "gig economy," which essentially strips away what workers have gained through sweat and blood these past two centuries.

Second, these workers are pitied against traditional cab drivers. This increase in competition enables the bosses to drive down all our wages. Instead, all drivers—from Uber, Lyft, cab companies—should unite with other transit workers, like subway and bus drivers of the City's Metropolitan Transit Authority. We keep this City running, and united, we can bring the bosses to a halt.

The Peace Referendum, Capitalist Cynicism

The Colombian peace referendum is only an agreement between an armed group with reformist and nationalist ideas who want to manage capitalism, and the Colombian Estate led by Juan Manuel Santos, who in turn, is trying to demobilize this revisionist organization. He wants the imperialist politics of the USA, China and other countries interested in the exploitation of the natural resources and labor of the working class. All the while the workers are plunged into poverty, lack of opportunities and a capitalist economy of exploitation and oppression.

The results of the referendum allow us to analyze the following aspects:

Of the 34 millions people able to vote, only 13 million did, showing that Colombians do not believe in the rotten system or its democracy. The apathy shown has to be transformed into revolutionary communist consciousness. That is what we are doing, trying to mobilize this unrest to benefit the working class.

The 6,377,082 people who voted yes, voted against violence, to dismantle the armed conflict, for implementation of measures in favor of a small minority of farmers, like land restitutions. They wanted compensation and retributions for the war victims. We should note that nothing will come out of these capitalist's gifts because the system cannot make good on its promises due to its necessity for profit to sustain its parasitic class.

The 6,431,000 who voted no were influenced by fascist Alvaro Uribe Velez's ideas, a known criminal and defender of militarism. He saw himself left out of the negotiation and distribution of the multimillion-dollar deals that were to come out of this agreement. He sabotaged it, sharpening contradictions between the capitalists.

No matter what the outcome, we'll always be wage slaves, as the system keeps going to benefit the capitalist class. The working class can't take sides when the capitalists fight among themselves; if we do we'll always lose.

The opportunists, leftist or not, always lie. Santos bombed the population and the working class; now he promises peace. Uribe killed and disappeared social activists; today he says he is interested in defending his country. Actually he is defending the economic gains for his capitalist class.

Meanwhile the Revolutionary Armed forces of Colombia (FARC) leaders, without communist leadership, became corrupt, ambitious, and accepted the handouts from world imperialism. They betrayed the working class by giving up their comrades after 50 years, some of those years filled with fierce armed struggle. They opened the way for the bosses' anticommunist, sexist, and racist lies to be used against the real revolutionary organizations fighting to destroy capitalism and to create a communist society.

In conclusion, no struggle for reform will solve the suffering and miserable situation of the workers. Only organizing and fighting with the Progressive Labor Party and its revolutionary program will end capitalism and its warlords once and for all. Join Us!✪

Bolshevik Revolution

Continued from page 8

And then, in 1945, defeated the mightiest and most barbaric army the capitalists had ever organized: the Nazis.

Heroic Fight Against the Nazis

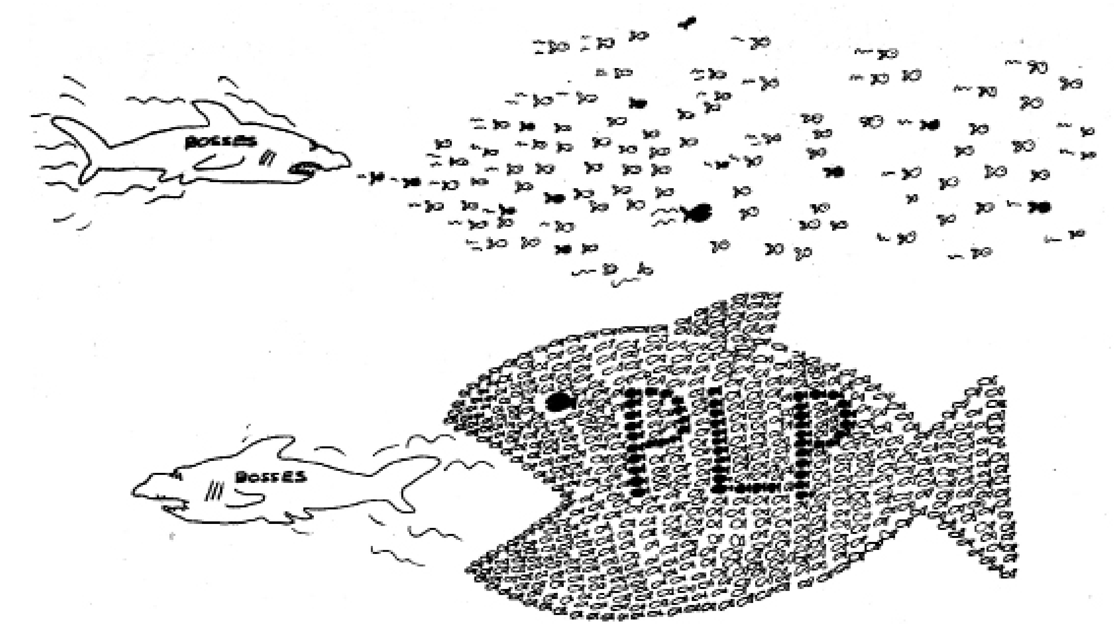
In 1941, the world's bosses again tried to destroy the revolution, with the German Nazis under Hitler. Using all of Europe's resources and the largest military machine ever assembled, they invaded the Soviet Union with four million troops. They discovered the Soviets were no pushover. Hitler's prediction -- endorsed by western military "experts" -- of capturing Moscow in six weeks went up in smoke.

Nazi troops found total destruction and desolation in captured cities or towns that could be vital to Nazi occupation -- the "scorched earth" policy. Soviet defenders burned whatever they could not evacuate and then organized armed resistance behind enemy lines: the partisans. Partisan groups organized wo "hit and run" attacks on railroads, bridges, convoys, communications lines, and distributed propaganda. Combined, partisan groups destroyed more material and killed more Nazis than the entire U.S.-led Western front throughout World War II.

Soviets that did evacuate ensured over 6,000 factories were dismantled and moved east of the Ural Mountains, and re-assembled to produce weapons again – all while under fire from Nazi planes.

In 1942, at the battle of Stalingrad, Soviet soldiers and workers fought for the city of Stalingrad block-by-block, house-by-house, and room-by-room to halt the "unbeatable" Nazi invaders. Workers in factories produced weapons 24 hours a day for the Red Army, sending weapons and tanks directly into battle. When Nazi troops captured factories, heroic Soviet workers and soldiers would re-take them.

The entire German Sixth Army, and 24 of Hitler's generals, were surrounded and killed or captured in the battle of Stalingrad. Never again would the Nazis mount a successful offensive against the Red Army. Stalingrad was truly the turning point of the Second World War. Not until the Nazis were on the run following their defeats at Stalingrad and in the Battle of the Kursk -- the biggest armored battle in world history, involving millions of soldiers and 6,000 tanks -- did the U.S.-British forces invade Western Europe in the second half of 1944.



It was the communist-led Soviet Union that smashed the Nazis, the largest and most powerful army ever mounted by a capitalist power. All of this was accomplished under the leadership of Joseph Stalin. No wonder he is reviled to this day by world capitalism. Now, with the very partial opening of the former Soviet archives and the Trotsky archive, we can see that all the allegations of crimes by Stalin related by pro-capitalist and Trotskyist "historians" are false, without exception.

Lessons To Be Learned

Unfortunately, the Soviets suffered from many political weaknesses which led to the return of capitalism to the USSR. From the beginning they believed that to achieve communism, socialism had to be established first, a belief Karl Marx had advanced. We have learned from that experience that socialism retained capitalism's wage system and therefore failed to wipe out many aspects of the profit system. Socialism put forward material incentives to the working class, rather than political ones, as the way to win workers to communism. We must win masses of workers to abolish capitalism's wage system and its division of labor and fight directly for communism.

Today revolutionary communists do not hold power anywhere, but this is a temporary historical setback. While widening imperialist wars, racist and sexist attacks on the working class are upon us, every dark night has its end.

PLP is a product of both the old international communist movement, and the struggle against its revisionism. So-called leftist groups have not learned history's lessons and continue to fight for nationalist "sharing of power" with capitalists, not for the working-class seizure of power and the dictatorship of the working class.

Our movement is daily fighting to learn from the Soviet Union's great battles and achievements, as well as its deadly errors that led to its collapse. Mainly that reformism, racism, nationalism and all forms of concessions to capitalism only lead workers to defeat. Give the capitalists and their ideas an inch, and they'll take a mile.

We honor the bold fight by the workers of the Bolshevik Revolution and the Soviet Union against capitalism and for a working-class communist world. They blazed a trail for us to follow on the road to revolution, attempting to overthrow two thousand years of class rule. Today, we must organize workers, students and soldiers to build a mass worldwide working class Party that will turn this era of imperialist wars into a new, international communist revolution.✪

Close Rikers Island



Across that bridge, thousands of my brothers and sisters are held in dangerous and isolated cells. They all suffer and some even feel forgotten… It is a broken system that tried to break me…" That's how one woman addressed nearly 1,000 workers and youth who marched this Fall, demanding the closing of the racist prison complex on Rikers Island. Not just Rikers, but the entire racist, sexist, capitalist system must go!

They marched to the base of the bridge that leads to the notorious prison near LaGuardia Airport. Many marchers had either been in Rikers or have family there. About 75 of the marchers were Legal Aid attorneys, members of UAW Local 2320, whose clients often end up there. Many carried posters of Kalief Browder, who was just 16 years old when he was sent to Rikers on a shoplifting charge and held for three years without a trial or conviction, because his family could not raise $3,000 bail. Two of those years were spent in solitary confinement. Kalief committed suicide after his release in June 2015.

There are more than 7,600 mostly poor Black and Latin women and men imprisoned on the island. About 80 percent are there because they are too poor to afford bail and 40 percent are in need of mental health facilities.

On October 3, Ramsey Orta, the young man who recorded the brutal murder of Eric Garner by the NYPD, began serving a four year sentence on Rikers. Ramsey was harassed by the NYPD and arrested about 25 times before they could get two charges to stick. Meanwhile, Daniel Pantaleo, the cop who was recorded committing murder, has received a promotion and a raise.

A commission is studying the logistics of closing Rikers, but NY Mayor de Blasio claims it will take years and cost billions, so he has offered on a 14-point reform program. One speaker called de Blasio's efforts, "like putting lipstick on a pig." This truth was underlined when the city agreed to pay a $5.75 million settlement in the death of inmate Bradley Ballard. In 2013, the mentally ill man was found covered in human waste after he was locked in his cell for six days without medication for his schizophrenia and diabetes.

Using words that also describe the racist profit system that creates these torture chambers, one of the speakers said, "Piecemeal improvements cannot address the root of the problem…It is a place where thousands of New Yorkers, including children, are robbed of their sanity, their dignity, their families, their communities and sometimes their lives. It…cannot be fixed." Rikers can't be fixed. Racist police killings can't be "fixed." Racist and sexist unemployment can't be "fixed." Imperialist wars for corporate profits can' be "fixed." The whole damn capitalist system can't be "fixed." It has to go. Join the Progressive Labor Party in the fight for communism, a world run by the working class!✪

Wounded Knee to Standing Rock, Indigenous Workers Fight Back

On April 1, 2016, an elder woman of the Standing Rock Sioux indigenous community decided that on that day the capitalists would not pass. With her grandchildren's help, the Sacred Stone Camp was established to protest a major oil pipeline planned by Sunoco, a major Rockefeller-linked oil company. This small protest has snowballed into militant, multiracial demonstrations of thousands of workers and youth bravely facing down lines of riot police. The communist Progressive Labor Party supports the struggle of this indigenous working class of Standing Rock. We call on PL'ers and friends to stand in solidarity at their jobs, unions and schools!

From Flint to Standing Rock, Water Is Life

The larger Great Sioux Nation consists of about 170,000 people. They live on a reservation on parts of North and South Dakota created by U.S. government treaties signed in 1851 and 1868. Today's survivors of the U.S. genocide struggle against racist police terror, alcoholism, drug abuse, and mass racist unemployment (Al Jazeera America, 2/25/16).

In 2014, Sunoco announced a $3.7 billion, 1,172 mile-long oil pipeline to connect North Dakota's oil fields to an oil tank center in southern Illinois. Part of the original route was through North Dakota's capital, Bismarck, whose population is 92 percent white. Following investigations by the local paper and a local outcry that the pipeline may endanger the city's water supply, Sunoco changed the proposed route to 40 miles south (CounterPunch, 11/8).

This current route favored by Sunoco brings the pipeline underneath the Missouri River, the Sioux reservation's only source of fresh water. This is a clear threat to indigenous drinking water as pipeline accidents occur over 121 times per year. So Flint, with a mainly Black population, gets lead in their water and the Sioux get oil leaks, while mainly white Bismarck gets clean water. Secondarily, the pipeline will run underneath burial grounds sacred to the Sioux.

Same Enemy, Same Seeds of Rebellion Sown

In response to these protests, police departments from six states have converged to terrorize the thousands of multiracial workers and youth. They have arrested protesters. They have used tasers, rubber bullets, tear gas, pepper spray and sound cannons. They are eager to bury memories of Ferguson, Baltimore, Baton Rouge, Charlotte, and other antiracist rebellions.

The Standing Rock reservation's conditions mirror those of the above-mentioned cities. They have paid a price for their history of resistance. The Sioux were among the last to disarm and submit to the U.S. government's conquest of natural resources. The reservation is the site of the 1890 Massacre at Wounded Knee, when around 300 Sioux women, men and children were surrounded and slaughtered by the U.S. army. The massacre was collective punishment for Sioux resistance, interfering with mining companies' efforts to extract the gold discovered in 1874 on Sioux land.

More insult was added in 1927, when the U.S. government desecrated sacred Sioux burial grounds with the construction Mount Rushmore, a monument to the U.S.' slaveholding and racist presidents. The project was the brainchild of Gutzon Borglum, a prominent member of the Ku Klux Klan.

Today, the KKK-style U.S. genocide continues. The Sioux, particularly Standing Rock Sioux, are among the poorest workers in the U.S. With a high school graduation rate of 14 percent, alcoholism and drug use among teenagers is rampant (Climate News, 9/18/). Forty percent of all suicides among U.S. indigenous are youth between 15 – 24. In Alaska and Hawaii Indigenous women are twice as likely to be sexually assaulted and ten times more likely to be murdered than any other social group in the U.S., likely due to sex trafficking cartels, which police agencies refuse to investigate (Al Jazeera America).

Forward to Communism

But Standing Rock is about more than just Rockefeller's new oil pipeline; it's about fighting back and avenging the targets of capitalism's racism. Many of the demonstrations have taken on a religious character – Sioux community members, and many young workers supporting the struggle, have even talked of renewing the "Ghost Dance" movement, a spiritual anti-colonial indigenous resistance movement popular in the 1890s.

The Progressive Labor Party fights in support of the indigenous workers because only communism can end their history of genocide, racist degradation and destruction. Communism means freeing workers from the chains of religious and superstitious thinking. Communism means not looking backward to "return" to indigenous beliefs or religion, but forward, to worldwide workers power, because we are one international class. The attack against the Standing Rock Sioux is an attack on the entire working class!

The multiracial workers fighting back in Standing Rock fight for all of us in their battle against Rockefeller's modern-day imperialist expansion. PLP fights to transform these antiracist struggles into an international mass working class movement for communism – and to inherit the legacy of millions of indigenous who never stopped resisting. Fight back!✪

Smash the School to Prison Pipeline

One of the capitalist class' main goals these days is reforming the School to Prison Pipeline. Yes, the same capitalist class that continually underfunds the schools and brings cops and metal detectors into the schools, is now concerned about anti-racist rebellions led by Black youth. The same capitalist class that closes schools in mostly Black and Latino working class neighborhoods, is now promoting discussions and "engagement" to resolve conflicts. The same capitalist class that created an explosion of new prisons over the past three decades, is now worried about having enough recruits for their military.

School to Revolution Pipeline

Members of the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) have been fighting for decades against the racist, school to prison pipeline. While the bosses needed more youth who are patriotic and willing to fight for US imperialism, we need soldiers and sailors who will stand up against the military brass and refuse to kill workers from other countries. The bosses want us to hack other countries' computer systems; we need to hack the billionaire corporations' profits. The bosses want us to work long hours in factories for little pay; we need organizers who fight to overthrow the entire capitalist system. We need our students to become revolutionary fighters for communism, where the working class runs everything.

School to Prison Pipeline

The School to Prison pipeline describes educational policies that lead to the arrest and detainment rather than education of working class youth, particularly Black and Latin youth. More cops and zero tolerance policies (which suspend or expel students for first offenses) were important parts of this pipeline. As a result, student arrests have risen, with Black students accounting for 31 percent of the arrests despite being only 16 percent of the student population (Department of Education Civil Rights Data Collection, 2014). In Paterson, NJ, over 230 Kindergarteners, 1st graders, and 2nd graders were given out of school detentions last year.

The ruling class has recognized that this causes political problems for them, and they started to make some changes. In many cities zero tolerance policies are being scaled back and replaced with "restorative circles." Students in conflict sit and "talk out" their problems rather than face immediate suspension. Many school leaders and politicians are also paying more lip service about fighting against the pipeline. Former Superintendent Cami Anderson, who led attacks on students and teachers for over 5 years in Newark, NJ spoke at a conference about the school-to-prison pipeline. "Education, including education reform, is part of the problem. We have not made a dent in the problem, in some cases we made it worse," she said. This is the same superintendent who shut down schools in most Black communities, getting rid of neighborhood schools for students, and eliminating the position of attendance counselors. Now we are to assume that these educational "leaders" are being self-critical and are looking out for the best interests of the working class.

School to War Pipeline

The rebellions in Ferguson and Baltimore confirmed the US bosses fears; millions of Black workers - either incarcerated, unemployed, or both – could cause a lot of problems for them. To coopt the militant leadership of rebellious Black workers, the US rulers want to appear that they are fighting racism. But other than stifling rebellions and fight backs, the capitalists need more Black and Latin workers to dedicate themselves to US imperialism. In 2014 it was reported that about 70 percent of the 34 million 17 – 24 year olds would not qualify for the military (Time Magazine, 6/29/14). While obesity is a big problem, poor high school graduation rates and criminal convictions are making many recruits ineligible or, even worse, disobedient.

AS Challenge consistently points out, the United States is facing more challenges from countries like Russia and China. As proxy-wars (where the major powers don't fight directly but use other groups) become more intense, it seems inevitable that the United States must put more boots on the ground in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. The inability to win millions of Black and Latin workers to fight and die for US imperialism can be disastrous for the US rulers. Fixing the School to Prison pipeline is one necessary step in the process.

School to Revolution Pipeline

PLP has been fighting racism in the schools for 50 years. From sit ins over budget cuts to protests against police brutality in schools, we have organized with students and parents to consistently be part of the fight against the school to prison pipeline. But we also fight for much more. We fight for our students to be intellectual leaders and organizers in the fight for communism. Many of those students lead the Progressive Labor Party today. This is the main goal when fighting these racist attacks in schools—building revolutionary leaders for communism.✪

BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION

Workers Took Power; Can Do It Again



Ninety-nine years ago, November 7, 1917, marked the beginning of the single most important event of the 20th century: the Bolshevik Revolution. It directly inspired the 1949 Chinese Revolution, and anti-imperialist struggles around the world from Vietnam, to nearly the entire continents of Africa and Latin America.

The Russian Revolution occurred within the vast Russian Empire, a capitalist state encompassing one-sixth of the earth's surface. Revolutionaries in the Bolshevik (communist) Party were anything but Russian. The working class there comprises hundreds of languages and thousands of ethnic groups. Workers of non-Russian ethnicity lived under the empire's racism and sexism. Meanwhile, the KKK-like "Black Hundreds" unleashed terror among workers with impunity.

The working class, headed by women and men Bolsheviks and their leader, Vladimir Lenin, proved once and for all that it was possible to strive for a world without exploitation. The working class, which produces all value, can enjoy the fruits of their labor and not have it stolen by a few parasitical bosses and their lackeys.

The Bolshevik Revolution was the first serious attempt by workers and peasants to seize, hold and consolidate state power. The "soviets," or workers' councils, called their new state the "Soviet Union." Even though capitalism has returned to the former Soviet Union, workers will not forget that the Soviet working class defeated capitalism in 1917. They smashed the imperialist armies of 17 countries (including Japan, the U.S., Britain, France, among others) which invaded Russia, in 1918, to try to crush the revolution. They freed the masses, especially women, from the yoke of capitalist, feudal and religious oppression.

The Bolshevik revolution frightened the world's bosses, who immediately sent armies from 17 countries to try—in British Prime Minister Churchill's words—to "strangle it in the cradle." From 1918 to 1923, millions of workers led by the Red Army defeated the imperialists' counter-revolution. Nearly five million died in that battle, more than 90 percent of whom were the most committed workers the revolution had produced. Lenin himself died because of injuries inflicted by a hired killer.

The masses showed great courage and determination to defend and build their revolution, under the leadership of their revolutionary party. They proved that the revolutionary violence on the part of the working class and peasantry were vital to the seizure of state power.

Achievements of the Revolution

During the 1920s and 30s, the Soviet workers reached heights of productive development that capitalists, given a similar time period and circumstances, could never have dreamed of. Under the dictatorship of the working class, the revolution coordinated their social-economic efforts for the production and exchange of the necessities, the comforts and even some luxuries of life, making them available to all.

In the 1930s, when the entire capitalist world sank into depression, and tens of millions worldwide were left jobless and starving (much like today), the Soviet Union was forging ahead building a new society without unemployment and hunger. They created some measure of a decent life for all workers in an incredibly short time, transforming a 90% illiteracy rate into one in which nearly everyone was literate.

Around 1938, without any official declaration, the USSR had achieved the era of free bread. One could enter a cafeteria and receive all the bread one wanted. You needed, you received -- to that extent. Even during all-out mobilization for heavy industry, living standards rose strikingly when the rest of the world was mired in the Great Depression.

The Soviet battle against racism was particularly significant. As pro-communist Black actor/ artist Paul Robeson said about his trips to the Soviet Union, he "felt like a human being for the first time since I grew up. Here I am not a Negro but a human being. Before I came I could hardly believe that such a thing could be.... Here, for the first time in my life, I walk in full human dignity."

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